



Municipal Services Agency

Department of Water Resources

Keith DeVore, Director

Steven C. Szalay,
Interim County Executive

Paul J. Hahn, Administrator

County of Sacramento

August 23, 2010

Joe Grindstaff, Interim Executive Officer
Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Avenue 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comments on the Delta Stewardship Council's Draft #3 of the Interim Delta Plan

Dear Mr. Grindstaff and Honorable Council Members:

Sacramento County commends the staff of the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) for its on-going efforts to transform the Interim Plan (IP) into a viable water and land use policy roadmap. If implemented in an effective and consistent manner, the proposed guidelines will not only help manage the resources in the Delta in the short term but also provide the requisite policy foundation for the permanent Delta Plan (due in January 2012). However, the County continues to believe that DSC leadership is unduly expediting the preparation (and adoption) of a key policy document. Unfortunately, the lack of comprehensive full-circle dialogue with local governments and other Delta stakeholders with interests in the Delta sets the stage for fragmented interpretation and implementation. Therefore, the County defers to its previously submitted comments on Drafts #1 and #2. For example:

- Policy Framework: The IP relies far too much on the policy platform set forth in the Delta Vision Strategic Plan rather than incorporating the strategies and concepts found in other Delta-related policy documents, such as the Delta Protection Commission's Resource Management Plan (RMP). We strongly encourage DSC leadership and staff to incorporate the policies and actions found in the RMP into the permanent Delta Plan, particularly those actions that provide long-term protection of agricultural resources/operations and foster sustained economic development by enhancing and promoting tourism and recreational opportunities.
- Land Use Authority: One of the IP new implementation actions establishes a new layer of regulatory review and approval (i.e., consistency findings) for all public and private projects defined as a "covered action." While Appendix A.3 contains revised procedures, based on collaboration of the legal counsel of the 5-Delta counties, more work and

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refinement is required to ensure this new project consistency finding process does not pose an undue regulatory barrier and negatively impact the approval of public and private local land use and water management projects located in the primary zone.

- Water Supply and Water Rights Protections: Draft # 3 of the IP continues to contain numerous references and descriptions of statutory citations but does not specifically address how the Plan's guidelines (interim early actions) will actually achieve the new statutory charges.
- Reducing Reliance on the Delta: Effectively addressing this statutory objective is a monumental task that will require the establishment of positive working partnerships with a host of local governments and stakeholders. The expedited preparation of the IP did not allow for substantive public and stakeholder outreach and feedback.

In closing, Sacramento County remains supportive of the DSC's efforts to implement the provisions set forth in the 2009 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act. However, the County is concerned that the "fast track" process has not provided sufficient time to vet and ground truth the policy guidelines proposed in the IP. This, in turn, will make it difficult for the DSC to oversee and administer solutions to the myriad of complex issues and challenges that must be addressed in order to protect the Delta in perpetuity. With that said, Sacramento County remains committed to being a collaborative partner in the development of future land use and water policy development and wants to play a substantive role in the future implementation of the IP and the preparation the permanent Delta Plan. Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Don Thomas, Senior Planner, at (916) 874-5140.

Sincerely,



Keith DeVore
Director of Water Resources

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